

Case 2606

***Megaloceros* Brookes, 1828 (Mammalia, Artiodactyla): proposed emendation of the original spelling**

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is the adoption of the name *Megaloceros* Brookes, 1828 (original spelling emended from *Megalocerus*) for the 'Irish elk' or giant deer, which has also been known as *Megaceros* Owen, 1844.

1. J. Brookes (1827a) published a listing of his zoological collection which included (p. 14) '*Fossil Bones* . . . likewise two uncommonly fine Crania of the *Megalocerus antiquorum Mihi*. (Irish), with unusually large horns, (in part restored) . . .'. In two subsequent editions (Brookes, 1827b and 1828a), virtually the same passage occurs except that *Megalocerus* is replaced by *Megaloceros*. However, both names must, on the basis of these publications, be regarded as nomina dubia since Brookes did not provide a sufficient description, definition or indication of the taxon.

2. Later, Brookes (1828b) published a new and enlarged listing of his collection, in the form of a catalogue whose availability for zoological nomenclature has been approved by the Commission (Opinion 1080; BZN 34: 21). This contains (p. 61) the names MEGALOCERIDAE and *Megalocerus*, with the phrase '*Cornibus deciduis palmatis*' which is sufficient to make *Megalocerus* available under Art. 12a. The type species by monotypy, *Megalocerus antiquorum* Brookes, 1828b (a subjective synonym of *Alce gigantea* Blumenbach, 1799, p. 697) is now popularly known as the 'giant deer' or 'Irish elk'.

3. Owen (1844, p. 237) named the giant deer *Cervus (Megaceros) hibernicus*. Although the name *Megaceros* is a junior synonym of *Megalocerus*, it soon entered common use at subgenus or genus level, although other names (mostly species names of the genus *Cervus*) were also current (see bibliography in Reynolds (1929, p. 52–58)).

4. Brookes' prior generic name for the giant deer was neglected for over a hundred years until it was revived by Simpson (1945, p. 154) who, however, spelt it *Megaloceros* as in Brookes 1827b and 1828a. Since that date, *Megaloceros* has become progressively more widespread, including standard texts (e.g. Flint (1957, p. 455); Romer (1966, p. 288); Gromova (1968, p. 520); Kurtén (1968, p. 164); Nilsson (1983, p. 283); Savage & Russell (1983, p. 378) and Martin & Klein (1984, p. 498); a further list of 63 references is held by the Commission Secretariat. Other authors, however, have continued to use *Megaceros* (e.g. Azzaroli (1953, p. 83); Viret (1961, p. 1018) and Stuart (1982, p. 56)). Several authors (e.g. Barnosky, 1985, p. 343) have explicitly recommended the use of *Megaloceros* on the grounds of priority, although they have not recognized the complication in relation to the spelling.

5. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary powers to rule that the correct original spelling of *Megaloceros* Brookes, 1828 is deemed to be *Megaloceros*;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the name *Megaloceros* Brookes, 1828 (gender: masculine), original spelling emended as in (1) above, type species by monotypy *Megaloceros antiquorum* Brookes, 1828;
- (3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *gigantea* Blumenbach, 1799, as published in the binomen *Alce gigantea* (valid specific name at the time of this application of the type species of *Megaloceros* Brookes, 1828);
- (4) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology the name *Megaloceros* Brookes, 1828 (spelling emended to *Megaloceros* in (1) above).

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